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RESEARCH AID

LABOR SUPPLY AND EMPLOYMENT IN COMMUNIST CHINA 1952-58



CIA/RR RA 59-12

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

OFFICE OF RESEARCH AND REPORTS

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FOREWORD

The purpose of this research aid is to provide background information on the population and labor force of Communist China. Because of the paucity of information on this subject, the estimates in this research aid are first approximations subject to further revision.

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LABOR SUPPLY AND EMPLOYMENT IN COMMUNIST CHINA*
1952-58

I. General

This research aid presents data on labor supply and employment in Communist China in 1952-58. In the absence of official statistical yearbooks, most of the data in Tables 1 through 6** were estimated from scattered and sometimes conflicting sources. Figures released by the Chinese Communist State Statistical Bureau were used wherever possible, and figures published since 1955 were used in preference to figures published earlier. The methods and procedures used to derive the data presented in this research aid are described in Appendix A.

In terms of labor supply and its utilization, only the most general conclusions can be drawn from the data shown in Tables 1 and 2. The estimates of total population used in this research aid were based on official Chinese Communist announcements, but the population in the primary working ages (15 through 64) had to be estimated. Although total civilian employment could be estimated from scattered sources, the distribution of employment by age and sex was not available and could not be estimated reliably. The distribution of workers and staff*** is shown in Tables 3 and 4; the distribution of industrial employment by branch is shown in Table 5 and by sector in Table 6.**** Data on employment by sector are available only for 1952 and 1955.

The data shown in Tables 2 through 6 are subject to unknown margins of error but are believed to be the best estimates of employment that can be made with the available data. The figures for employment in enterprises by branch (see Table 3) and the figures for employment in those branches of industry taken from source 1/[†] are considered to be the most reliable.

* The estimates and conclusions in this research aid represent the best judgment of this Office as of 1 July 1959.

** Tables 1 through 6 follow on pp. 4 through 8, below.

*** The term workers and staff is defined in II, below.

**** The term sector is used to designate the category of ownership of an economic activity (state, cooperative, joint state-private, and private). The term branch refers to the type of activity, such as industry or construction.

† For serially numbered source references, see Appendix B.

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The data on employment contained in this research aid relate only to employed civilians, both the unemployed and the armed forces being excluded. Communist China does not report rural unemployment and reports only registered unemployment in urban areas. There were 1,150,000 "registered unemployed and job-seeking persons" in 1957. 2/ China does not publish data on the strength of its armed forces.

II. Workers and Staff as an Employment Classification

In the system of employment classification used in Communist China, all persons who are paid a fixed wage or salary are called workers and staff, including paid employees of private enterprises as well as of socialist enterprises. This classification, however, does not include entrepreneurs who share in the profits of an enterprise or individual artisans who work for themselves. Workers and staff are primarily nonagricultural. Although employees in state agriculture are included in the category, they represent less than 4 percent of the total.

The total number of workers and staff increased from 15.8 million persons at the end of 1952 to 35.5 million persons at the end of 1958, an average annual rate of growth of 14 percent. A substantial part of this increase is due to the reclassification of large groups of people in at least 2 years -- 1956 and 1958. More than 3 million former entrepreneurs in industry and commerce were added to workers and staff in 1956, 3/ and at least 4 million persons -- most of whom probably were members of handicraft cooperatives -- were reclassified in 1958.* If these groups are added to the base in 1952, the annual rate of growth for 1953-58 is reduced to 8 percent.

III. Growth of Employment in 1958

It is estimated that agricultural employment in Communist China increased from 247 million persons in 1957 to 265 million persons in 1958.** An increase of 7 million persons was to be expected from the normal growth in the population of working age, and the remainder, 11 million persons, was the result of slightly higher rates of participation. New additions to the rural labor force, however, accounted for only a small part of the huge amounts of labor used in rural China during 1958 as part of the "leap forward" program. Most of the additional labor power came from the more intensive use of labor: that is, the labor force was compelled to work more hours per day and more days per year.

* See Table 3, p. 5, below, and Appendix A.

** See Table 2, p. 4, below, and Appendix A.

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The total number of workers and staff increased from 24.5 million persons at the end of 1957 to 35.5 million persons at the end of 1958.* This increase of 11 million persons, or 45 percent, reflects both the reclassification of approximately 4 million persons (mainly handicraftsmen) as workers and staff and the hiring of 7 million new employees. 4/ These employees represent by far the largest number of new employees hired during any one year since the regime came to power in 1949. Considerably more than half of these new employees were urban housewives and peasants. 5/

* See Table 3, p. 5, below, and Appendix A.

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Table 1

Estimated Population of Communist China, by Age Group a/
1952-58

Age Group	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956	1957	1958
Total	<u>576</u>	<u>583</u>	<u>592</u>	<u>603</u>	<u>616</u>	<u>632</u>	<u>648</u>
0 through 14 years	227	232	237	243	250	258	267
15 through 64 years	331	333	336	341	346	353	360
65 years or older	18	18	19	19	20	21	21

a. Midyear figures. For methodology, see Appendix A.

Table 2

Estimated Civilian Employment in Communist China, by Branch of the Economy a/
1952-58

Branch	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956	1957	1958
Total	<u>271</u>	<u>276</u>	<u>281</u>	<u>286</u>	<u>293</u>	<u>300</u>	<u>322</u>
Agriculture	<u>224</u>	<u>227</u>	<u>231</u>	<u>235</u>	<u>240</u>	<u>247</u>	<u>265</u>
Nonagriculture	<u>47</u>	<u>49</u>	<u>50</u>	<u>51</u>	<u>53</u>	<u>53</u>	<u>57</u>
Workers and staff	15 b/	17	19	19	22	24	32 b/

a. Midyear figures except as noted. For methodology, see Appendix A.

b. Annual average figures.

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Table 3

Estimated Number of Workers and Staff in Communist China, by Type of Establishment and Branch a/
1952-58

Type of Establishment and Branch	Million Persons						
	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956	1957	1958
Total	<u>15.8</u>	<u>18.2</u>	<u>18.8</u>	<u>19.0</u>	<u>24.2</u>	<u>24.5</u>	<u>35.5</u>
Enterprises	<u>11.8</u>	<u>12.7</u>	<u>13.1</u>	<u>13.1</u>	<u>17.6</u>	<u>17.9</u>	<u>30.2</u>
Industry	5.3	6.1	6.4	6.1	7.2	7.9	15.9
Construction	1.0	2.2	2.2	2.2	3.0	2.5	4.9
Transport and communications	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.6	1.9	3.8
Agriculture, forestry, water conservancy, and meteorology	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.9	1.4
Banking	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.5
Municipal public utilities	b/	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Commerce	3.9	2.5	2.5	2.7	4.6	4.1	3.6
Institutions	<u>4.0</u>	<u>5.5</u>	<u>5.7</u>	<u>5.9</u>	<u>6.6</u>	<u>6.6</u>	<u>5.3</u>
State administration	1.5	1.5	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.3
Culture, education, and health	2.5	4.0	4.1	4.3	5.0	5.0	4.0

a. Year-end figures. For methodology, see Appendix A.

b. Less than 0.05 million.

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Table 4

Estimated Number of Workers and Staff in Communist China
by Type of Establishment and Sector a/
1952 and 1955

Type of Establishment and Sector	Million Persons	
	1952	1955
Total	<u>15.8</u>	<u>19.0</u>
Enterprises	<u>11.8</u>	<u>13.1</u>
State	6.6	8.9
Cooperative	1.1	1.4
Joint state-private	0.3	0.8
Private	3.8	2.0
Institutions	<u>4.0</u>	<u>5.9</u>

a. Year-end figures. For methodology, see Appendix A.

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Table 5

Estimated Industrial Employment in Communist China, by Branch a/
1952-57

Branch	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956	1957
Total	<u>5,150</u>	<u>5,692 b/</u>	<u>6,200 b/</u>	<u>6,246 b/</u>	<u>6,703</u>	<u>7,538 b/</u>
Heavy industry	<u>2,671</u>	<u>2,967</u>	<u>3,255</u>	<u>3,293</u>	<u>3,604</u>	<u>4,447</u>
Coal	481	506	527	549	576	N.A.
Petroleum	56	67	89	98	112	N.A.
Electric power	61	74	92	101	114	N.A.
Metal processing	803	883	928	904	1,063	N.A.
Iron and steel	212	254	262	277	304	N.A.
Nonferrous metals	260	280	316	312	320	N.A.
Chemicals	104	115	132	134	168	N.A.
Building materials	394	438	509	518	547	N.A.
Lumber	300	350	400	400	400	N.A.
Light industry	<u>2,479</u>	<u>2,725</u>	<u>2,945</u>	<u>2,953</u>	<u>3,099</u>	<u>3,091</u>
Textiles	970	1,075	1,086	1,106	1,220	N.A.
Paper	77	91	90	84	86	N.A.
Food processing	668	739	795	777	787	N.A.
Other	764	820	974	986	1,006	N.A.

a. Annual average figures except as noted. For methodology, see Appendix A.

b. Midyear figures.

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Table 6

Estimated Industrial Employment in Communist China, by Sector a/
1952 and 1955

Sector	Thousand Persons	
	1952	1955
Total	5,150	6,246
State and cooperative	2,882	4,134
Joint state-private	248	785
Private	2,020	1,327

a. Annual average figures. For methodology, see Appendix A.

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APPENDIX A

METHODOLOGY

I. Table 1: Estimated Population of Communist China, by Age Group, 1952-58

The estimates of total population used in this research aid are based on official Chinese Communist announcements. The official census figure is used for 1953, and the figures for 1955-57 were taken from speeches and various statements of Chinese officials. 6/ In the absence of reliable figures for 1952, 1954, and 1958, the population had to be estimated on the basis of the rates of growth implied by the figures for 1953 and 1955-57.*

The distribution of the population by age for 1953 was derived from unclassified estimates of the Foreign Manpower Research Office of the US Bureau of the Census. The distribution for 1958 is a projection of the distribution for 1953, based on the assumptions of unchanged fertility and an annual average rate of increase in the population of 22 per 1,000. The distributions for 1952 and 1954-57 were derived by extrapolation and interpolation.

II. Table 2: Estimated Civilian Employment in Communist China, by Branch of the Economy, 1952-58

The figures for total civilian employment, agricultural employment, and nonagricultural employment in Communist China are the estimates that have been in use in this Office since June 1958. These estimates are to be found in source 8/. The estimates of agricultural employment for 1952-57 are based on the reported number of households in rural China and on assumptions about the average number of persons who work in each household. Agricultural employment for 1958 is derived from source 9/. The estimates of nonagricultural employment are based on the reported number of workers and staff 10/ and on estimates of the number of persons working in handicrafts, private trade, native transport, and consumer services.

* For a discussion of some of the problems in estimating the size of the population of Communist China, see source 7/.

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III. Table 3: Estimated Number of Workers and Staff in Communist China, by Type of Establishment and Branch, 1952-58

A. Total Employment

1952-57: Source 11/.

1958: Year-end employment for 1958 is the sum of (1) 1957 year-end employment, (2) 7 million new employees hired in 1958, 12/ and (3) about 4 million persons in handicrafts and other types of nonagricultural employment who were transferred to the category of workers and staff in 1958.

B. Type of Establishment

The terms enterprises (ch'i-yeh) and institutions (shih-yeh) are used to distinguish units that are financially self-supporting (enterprises) from units that depend entirely on the state budget for funds (institutions). Although employment in enterprises and institutions is not reported directly, all employees in institutions receive free medical care, 13/ and data on the number of persons receiving free medical care are available for 1952-56. 14/ For 1957 and 1958, employment in enterprises and institutions was computed from official data giving the percentage of workers and staff employed in "productive departments." 15/ The terms productive departments and nonproductive departments are assumed to refer to enterprises and institutions, respectively.

C. Branch

1. Industry

1952 and 1954-57: Source 16/.

1953: This figure is the sum of figures for employment in the socialist and private sectors. 17/

1958: Employment data are available only for four categories of enterprises: (a) agriculture, forestry, water conservancy, and meteorology; (b) banking; (c) municipal public utilities; and (d) commerce. Employment in the remaining categories (industry, construction, and transport and communications) is the residual. To derive estimates of employment in each of these categories, this residual was divided among the categories in the same proportions as in 1957.

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2. Construction

1952-53 and 1956-57: Source 18/.

1955: Separate employment data are available only for three categories of enterprises: (a) industry, (b) transport and communications, and (c) municipal public utilities. Employment in the remaining categories (construction, agriculture, forestry, water conservancy, and meteorology; banking; and commerce) is the residual. To derive estimates of employment in each of these categories, this residual was divided among the categories by using the percentage weights given in source 19/.

1954: Interpolated.

1958: See Industry, 1, above.

3. Transport and Communications

1952 and 1955-56: Source 20/.

1953-54: Interpolated.

1957: Derived by subtracting employment in industry and construction from a combined figure for employment in industry, construction, and transport and communications derived from source 21/.

1958: Total for 1957 plus twice the increment reported for the first half of 1958. 22/

4. Agriculture, Forestry, Water Conservancy, and Meteorology

1952: First Five Year Plan. 23/

1955: See Construction, 2, above.

1957: Sum of employment in agriculture, water conservancy, 24/ and forestry 25/ and of estimated employment in meteorology.

1953-54 and 1956: Sum of employment in state agriculture 26/ and of estimated employment in forestry, water conservancy, and meteorology derived by interpolation.

1958: Total for 1957 plus twice the increment reported for the first half of 1958. 27/

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5. Banking

1952-53 and 1958: Source 28/.

1955: See Construction, 2, above.

1954 and 1956-57: Interpolated.

6. Municipal Public Utilities

1952 and 1957: First Five Year Plan (1953-57) and First Five Year Plan goal. 29/

1953-56 and 1958: These figures are interpolated and extrapolated.

7. Commerce

1952-54 and 1956-57: Derived as the residual of employment in enterprises. Year-to-year changes in the level of employment in commerce, therefore, are not necessarily significant.

1955: See Construction, 2, above.

1958: Total for 1957 minus the decrement reported for the first half of 1958. 30/ It is assumed that there was no further decrease during the second half of 1958.

8. State Administration

1952: First Five Year Plan. 31/

1953-54: Interpolated.

1955: Source 32/

1956: It is assumed that there was no change between 1956 and 1957.

1957: Announced as 6 percent higher than in 1953. 33/

1958: Total for 1957 minus the decrement reported for the first half of 1958. 34/ It is assumed that there was no further decrease during the second half of 1958.

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9. Culture, Education, and Health

1952-58: Derived as the residual of employment in institutions. Year-to-year changes in the level of employment in culture, education, and health, therefore, are not necessarily significant.

IV. Table 4: Estimated Number of Workers and Staff in Communist China, by Type of Establishment and Sector, 1952 and 1955

The total number of workers and staff, the total employment in enterprises, and the total employment in institutions are taken from Table 3.* Employment in enterprises, by sector, was derived from the percentage distribution given in source 35/.

V. Table 5: Estimated Industrial Employment in Communist China, by Branch, 1952-57

A. Total

1952: Estimated from reported annual average employment in industry and construction together and from year-end employment reported for each branch separately. 36/

1953-57: Source 37/.

B. Heavy and Light Industry

1952-56: The totals are the sums of the estimates prepared separately for the individual branches.

1957: Source 38/.

C. Branches

1. Coal, Iron and Steel, Textiles, and Paper

1952-56: Source 39/

2. Metal Processing

1952-56: An estimate of the number of "workers" was derived from the value of fixed assets and fixed assets per worker. 40/ "Workers" were assumed to comprise 70 percent of total employment ("workers" plus "staff") because workers in industry as a whole comprised 71 percent of total employment in 1952 and 70 percent in 1956.

* P. 5, above.

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3. Lumber

1954 and 1956: Derived from source 41/.

1952-53: Estimated on the basis of increases in production of lumber.

1955: Interpolated.

4. Petroleum, Electric Power, Nonferrous Metals, Chemicals, Building Materials, Food Processing, and Other Light Industry

Total employment in these branches for each year during 1952-56 was derived as a residual by subtracting the total employment in the six branches listed in C, 1, through C, 3, above, from total industrial employment. For the years 1952 and 1956, employment in each of the branches under consideration was reported or could be estimated with confidence. Estimates for the intervening years were derived by interpolation.

a. Petroleum

1956: Source 42/.

1952: Employment in the petroleum industry was assumed to have doubled between 1952 and 1956.

b. Electricity

1952 and 1956: Source 43/.

c. Nonferrous Metals

1956: Total employment was assumed to be double the figure for employment in local-state, cooperative, and joint state-private enterprises, which was given in source 44/.

1952: Employment in 1952 is derived from the estimate for 1956. The value of production doubled between 1952 and 1956, and productivity increased by 63 percent. 45/ Employment, therefore, increased by 23 percent.

d. Building Materials and Food Processing

1952 and 1956: The number of workers was derived from the amount of electricity used by each branch and the electricity used per worker. 46/ It was assumed that workers comprise 70 percent of total employment. (See Metal Processing, 2, above.)

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e. Chemicals

1952 and 1956: See Building Materials and Food Processing, d, above.

1955: Employment is reported to have increased 29 percent in 1952-55. 47/

1953-54: Interpolated.

f. Other Light Industry

1952-56: Residual.

VI. Table 6: Estimated Industrial Employment in Communist China, by Sector, 1952 and 1955

Total industrial employment is taken from Table 5*; state and cooperative employment is the residual; joint state-private employment is given in source 48/; and private employment is derived from source 49/, which gives the percentage distribution of industrial employment by sector for 1952 and 1955. These percentages cannot be used to distribute total industrial employment, because the category "state and cooperative employment" includes an unknown number of members of handicraft cooperatives, which are not considered to be industrial enterprises.

* P. 7, above.

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APPENDIX B

SOURCE REFERENCES

Evaluations, following the classification entry and designated "Eval.," have the following significance:

<u>Source of Information</u>	<u>Information</u>
Doc. - Documentary	1 - Confirmed by other sources
A - Completely reliable	2 - Probably true
B - Usually reliable	3 - Possibly true
C - Fairly reliable	4 - Doubtful
D - Not usually reliable	5 - Probably false
E - Not reliable	6 - Cannot be judged
F - Cannot be judged	

"Documentary" refers to original documents of foreign governments and organizations; copies or translations of such documents by a staff officer; or information extracted from such documents by a staff officer, all of which may carry the field evaluation "Documentary."

Evaluations not otherwise designated are those appearing on the cited document; those designated "RR" are by the author of this research aid. No "RR" evaluation is given when the author agrees with the evaluation on the cited document.

Except for finished CIA intelligence and sources evaluated individually, all sources in this research aid are evaluated RR 2.

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